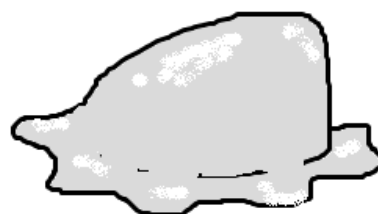
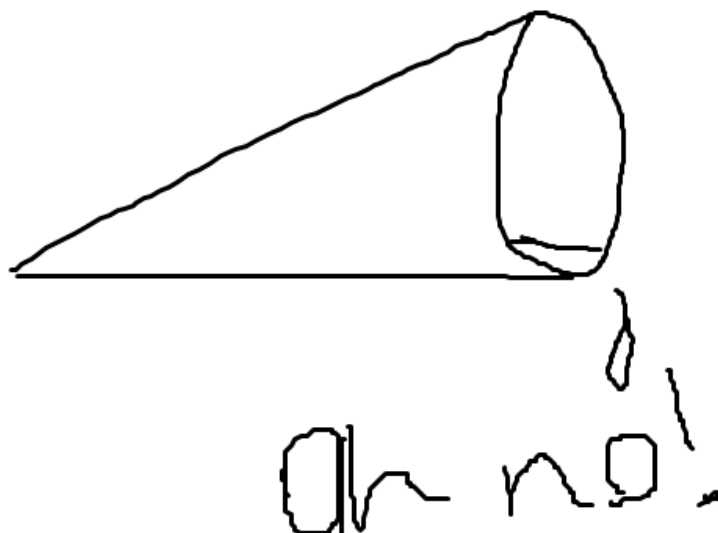


4?

CROSS WHAAAHs

UNITE TWICE: ARE U UNITED?



Filler Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday,

**Are you ready for after the boom
time, for the depression?**

It's alright

Unite for two nights

Disclaimer: This is written through the lens of a downer. It's temporary and to do with personal fucking up of brain than to do with the social and emotional reality of the groups here united in leisure and/or political pursuits.

Nothing to highlight the desolate, relatively self centred pursuit of downer music than being surrounded by jubilant unionists and people who get their kicks from goading far right protesters into bashing them. There are dark clouds over us that are wonderful to look at and not great when the lightning strikes. The crowd slam into each other playfully or bobs up and down like they're holding a baby to rock to sleep. I'm into my sober phase and haven't got the energy. Got a beer from the Unite kitchen fridge shouted by an old friend who was running the show alone, one who's closely involved with protests and strikes. So I feel a bit in between the groups. All the bands sounded sick, the unionists yelling "UNION!" "POWER!" "UNION!" "POWER" all at once, after their win against Chemist Warehouse's working conditions and pay sounded sick and everyone was really nice n cosy to me (got cheek pinchies and bottle fed beer by certain Sorry Golden State members heh). Jousting and Cakewalk, the unfamiliar bands on the bill, exceeded expectations greatly. Bin Licker really nice to stand there and stare with emotionless pleasure. Sorry Golden State finding their feet – wait, finding the floor, more, which was a pleasure to see. Tried some new songs, hopefully they will flesh out an album some time.

Standing, or sitting, up the back for some time watching the crowd and the bands all sober had given me the thought of 'no man's land' on and off. I feel like an autistic thinking machine. A family member once said my friends were like zombies and of course they are not (he doesn't know them) but the grain of truth here is in this flesh-eating culture. The drinking and staying out is the flesh-eating part, and reminds me now of my own fragility rather than strength, and the lack of Ritalin counter-acting the booze makes me feel particularly vulnerable, even though I was still vulnerable on the stuff, just with the warm stimulant buzz and feeling of self-control. I

miss drinking and hanging out properly. I will do it again. It's just that the thought that we're gathering around the flesh-eating pursuit of drugs n alcohol, is kind of tiring. And equally weird to think about is the opposite pursuit of life-building, like being healthy and affirming life n longevity so much that you want to have babies. So I'm standing there thinking of all this weird shit instead of having fun with my wasted friends, really. Plus looking at the shit on the walls at unite, looking at their activist high based on unified fight against a bunch of greedy people.

We all hate stuff about our work n lives, why do we seem so weak and atomised? Blerughghh drugs alcohol life succcks but then eughrr the aesthetic n aggressive self-confidence of unified political effort is kind of vulgar in a way too so I guess just, just, look, I don't know what to do. I'm in no-man's land. Guess that means I listen to no-wave. I kind of say yes to everything and everyone (is why I was the Whore of Babylon) but also kind of say no, no to everything. But, yes, but.. Ahhhh!

Another humbling fact is that I may directly benefit from the Chemist Warehouse strikes as there is a job opening I was told about by my job agent there. If they did not win, I would have qualms about applying for it because some poor person probs lost it in the strike. I would be a SCAB. And I might face sexual harrassment, shit pay and stuff like that. So, thank you for what you've done for my life, Australian Worker's Union. You might scare my little friend a bit by being big men yelling stuff in a safe space but at least you gave the higher-ups at the corporation a fright.

Unite last week (or, mostly my own introspection again) where all the bands were great again

Fucking, like, ten bands on this lineup and I was sober sans one beer for that one too. Ah who wants to hear about my sobriety or lack thereof this much? You wanna hear the objective journalistic facts, don't you. Were the bands any good? What did they do? Well, I do want to mention the creaming soda Wolvie gave me while I was sitting on the couch.

It's not that easy to just change. Your brain needs to adjust for a while and get used to new stimuli sober. A sense of purpose and connection. And even if we had a weekend off, I don't think that would quite cut it. It's quite something when you recognise somebody who's been sober for a while too.

Anyhow, Keany's went off. That's the kind of band you could like sober because there are all these words and it's catchy. Something to churn over in your mind and feel all crisp and accurate with.

Yuck I can't stop thinking of my own inner no man's land. Somebody in the crowd told me that this is the limit. The drink, the music, the sitting around a car park. It's like, communism or something. Not half bad but still, it's limited. "These are your people?" "Yeah", I said. I just think you're all beautiful and complex and broken and loveable and interesting. But I'm very sober and a bit empty. I don't know what to do with my sobriety. I'm as bereft of ideas for liberation from alienation as everyone else, when I put myself on the spot like that. It's pretty much enough that I'm another sensitive human who shares nuanced ideas and observations and self-reflections with the rest of you, like you share to me. It's reciprocal and that's a good social fabric. It's real. I bet there's shit going on in your minds now and then too. Pretty much guaranteed that we go through these phases. We write songs, articles, internet posts and so on, have little private chats to each other. Most of the time these inner revelations come out like a blur in the drunken weekends, it seems, or in random conversations with housemates. Is that enough? What do we do? Aren't we enough for each other, to make us happy? What else is going on with society and family and work and so on? Where would we begin to work it all out properly, aside from the obvious stuff like personal therapy?

Sometimes I just want to give up and be back in the psych ward, like I am not a person with a real life. Bye society. But paradoxically I feel more validated now that I have real problems like my little outsider society. I know you're all there and understand. There is a warmth to that. But most

of the time, when the wound is raw especially, and when everybody else is looking after their own shit to, and we get put into the hands of the state or our families, it feels really vulnerable. No human feels like enough to salve the wound sometimes so you call on God, or some ideas. You feel like nobody can help you but yourself.

But you still live and are defined by your social group in a lot of ways. You have to exist in society and come to terms with what words, clothes, jobs, recreation and so on you want to occupy your time with. Running into nature isn't really a thing unless you have the means and skills for camping or something, and even after then, society awaits.

Brisbane is a lot of society, like a bunch of bands crammed in an activist space crammed between car parks and busy nightclub and luxury car dealer streets. It's why I moved here. If you don't have society in Brisbane, you must not live near the city. It's said to be a laid back city, but it only is in the sense that people are maybe a bit lost and drifting. I want to feel sharp and decisive and purposeful. Now I just feel like I'm trapped in my body because I don't know where to go. I like nature more, I like sensory stimulation. I liked the space exhibition called A Human Adventure at the Museum. I like a lot of things, sober. But all the in between moments where I have to choose, rather than just live for the weekend, and rather than imagining that I am doing important writing work while getting fucked up on Robitussin, alcohol and ritalin, just feel like it's hard to just not feel trapped.

I do enjoy music, I like things. This place will be here going round and round, noncommittal, week in and week out. The unite show with a bunch of bands was an amazing thing, thanks Mark from Gravel Samwidge and Unite. It amazes me how people can be someone and do something and practice so hard and play together with other people. I am hunched over my keyboard cretinously. It's amazing that I can manage to write so much stuff too. But who's giving us the pat on the back apart from each other, in the end? Is there a higher principle? Where, how do we define it, and where will we end up? What's the end game, and what will we show for ourselves?

This isn't pressure to start planning, stressing or anything. I don't know.

This Meat Thump shirt I'm wearing. "It doesn't feel good, why don't I do it". Nope, the Meat Thump thread hasn't been dropped. Meat Thump is still the horrifying truth staring me in the face as the conclusion of our behavior taken to the extreme degree.

Got all this drum machine 80s style music, real 80s energy punk that would've excited me heaps. It still sounds good. But what next. What next. And after that, and after that. Fuck's sake, I'm either exceedingly sober and tapped into some kind of universal ideal that accepts everything else as extraneous, socially constricted (constructed) bullshit that's half right and half wrong, or I am mentally ill. I think I am half the former and half the latter. Even the health seeking childbearing, sensible, sheltering square pursuits aren't so perfect. I want to be angels in heaven-on-earth, damn it all.

Oh Lord, oh my friends, please keep giving me the things I need to distract myself from the all the bullshit and help me have the strength I need to not turn this place into more of a festering headwound party than it already gets sometimes. Give me the flesh I need, oh Jesus Christ that died on a bloody cross, and stop me from infecting others with flesh-eating half-life zombie ideas, whether they be conservative or progressive or recreational. Please, please give me life and excitement. There's no reason why not, except in order for me to empathise and reach out to others while I am in a shitty state.

Filler Friday

What do you call a person who is bored beyond belief for no reason and is trying to let out a playful side that has been buried by antipsychotic meds and general uh, I don't want to finish this sentence. Dullness? I hope this rambling at least is a sign that I'm not giving up finding some interesting thoughts to share. Thanks for bearing with me in the comedown.

Economic downturn and my psychology

This last few months has been a period of deflation and now stabilisation of a low-normal, neutral mood, bobbing up and down like a bouy on the ocean of neurochemicals and subconscious stuff. Semi-conscious stuff. I might be starting to ramble now, which means that the medication dose is not high enough to stop that and focus me on something else. Going for a run, maybe? If my leg isn't too injured. Tried to do the splits in the psych ward and I did. Not a great move.

Anyhow, after a boom comes bust, given some factors almost certainly present, and also, after a bust, and some stabilisation, comes a boom again, but done with some regulations in place to protect from the bust hitting too seriously again. Like Kevin Rudd's stimulus package. These may be austere, boring and/or unstable times, but someone or something will be there to help keep things ticking along.

There are also benefits to economic downturns or depressions, such as learning a greater reliance on friends, family and thrift, and the pruning of pastimes and productivity that was unnecessary and not conducive to anything reliable.

A lean Christmas might be less thrilling, but there's something nice about hitting the floor when hitting the ceiling can be a dangerous excess. You won't have a billion presents to open and evaluate, just an apple, some cookies, something wholesome like that. Everyone realises that family singalongs aren't embarrassing because there's no pride left. Something like that. Maybe everyone's mourning, though, and plays something on the piano. That means that maybe next year, going above and beyond means a respectable dinner and a glass of wine, with a cheers to good company and basic comforts. Some years or decades later you might hit the 1980's and go crazy at the shopping centre (or an American mall, I like to picture) and have everybody over, having the most excessive Christmas ever, and do it a few years straight, even, until some people move away, someone loses their job, and so on. Then you'll build up slowly to the next

Christmases, starting slowly, and learning to appreciate small things. You won't have those mutated presents-for-the-sake-of-presents, bargain bin, excessive purchases leading to waste, either. It may feel like you're wasting time, but you really are doing your best. And you never know what will happen.



Illustration 1: Friends in crowd



Illustration 2: Gravel Sanwidge

Thank you xox

